

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 were pending when last examined, of which Claims 1-7 and 9 stand rejected. Claims 1, 3, 4, and 8 are amended. Claims 10-21, which stand withdrawn, are hereby canceled.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 3 is rejected for its use of the word “Teflon.” The tradename “Teflon” has been replaced with the chemical name that describes Teflon. It is public information that Teflon is polytetrafluoroethylene.

Claim 4 is rejected for its use of the phrase “the bottom surface” for which there is insufficient antecedent basis. The phrase “the bottom surface” has been changed to “the bottom face.”

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 1, 4-7, and 9 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,210,481 to Sakai et al. (“Sakai”).

Claim 1 is patentable over Sakai at least because it recites, “a cleaning member ... covering the bottom face of the receiving recession.” As shown in the subject application, for example in FIG. 1, the cleaning member 130 is deposited on the bottom face of the receiving recession 120. In contrast, Sakai’s cleaning mechanism 50 uses a drain pipe 54 as the cleaning mechanism. As shown in Sakai’s FIG. 5 and described in Sakai’s col. 6, lines 19-26, Sakai’s drain pipe 54 does not cover any part of the bottom face – rather, it is connected to a hole in the drain groove 53. Thus, Claim 1 is patentable over Sakai.

Claims 4-7 and 9 depend from Claim 1 and are patentable over Sakai for the same reason as Claim 1.

Furthermore, Claim 4 is patentable over Sakai for the additional reason that it recites that “the cleaning member is detachably attached on the bottom face.” Sakai’s drain pipe 54 is not **detachably** attached. There is no teaching or suggestion in Sakai that the drain pipe 54 is detachable from the bath chamber 52.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,933,186 to Scheffler (“Scheffler”).

Claims 2 and 3 are patentable over Sakai and Scheffler because they both depend from Claim 1, which recites “... a cleaning member ... covering the bottom face of the receiving recession.” As explained above, Sakai does not show a cleaning member that covers any face of the receiving recession. Nor does Scheffler, which discloses a cylindrical housing unit that does not even have a “receiving recession” for receiving a slit nozzle.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 8 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants thank the examiner for this indication of allowability. Claim 8 is now in condition for allowance.

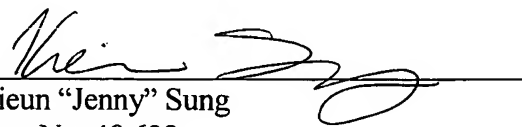
Conclusion

The Examiner is invited to call Applicant’s attorney at the number below in order to speed the prosecution of this application.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2257.

Respectfully submitted,

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